



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

This week AOT officially launches our new and innovative Travel Deals section of the agency's consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com. Travel Deals, formerly Arizona Vacation Values, was created as an opportunity for statewide businesses to post great new travel and vacation deals for visitors planning a trip to the Grand Canyon State. The Web site features cutting-edge technology including several new enhancements such as an easier search engine for visitors to find and compare great vacation ideas from all across the state. And businesses will find that the new technology will make it easier to post vacation deals and the ability to combine their travel deal with another business to create the ultimate travel and vacation package. I hope everyone takes some time to review the new section. This is a great tool to highlight many of Arizona's amazing vacation destinations and activities.

To register and to post new deals, please visit the Travel Deals section of www.azot.gov. Your travel deal will then appear on the consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com.

Also, I'd like to congratulate the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, along with the Gila Indian Community, for being awarded for their efforts to help preserve Arizona's Native American culture. The Resort was awarded the Travel Industry Association's Odyssey Award "Geotourism Award for Sustaining an Indigenous Culture or Community." The TIA Odyssey Awards are considered the premier industry awards program that recognized the best in the travel and tourism industry. This is a great accomplishment for the Resort and a wonderful opportunity to help raise the national awareness of Arizona's geotourism attractions.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Tourism University (ATU) Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy Workshop

ATU, the educational outreach program created by the Arizona Office of Tourism, is designed to educate statewide tourism organizations on the tried and true tourism marketing tactics and the latest developments in the industry. The ultimate goal of ATU is to give communities the tools and resources they need to successfully develop their own tourism programs and to effectively work in partnership with AOT. The "How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy" is a dynamic session that will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will also cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

November 14, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Hon-Dah Resort-Casino and Conference Center
777 Highway 260
Pinetop, AZ 85935

December 5, 2007

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Hotel Valley Ho
6850 East Main Street
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

December 13, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Cochise College Benson Campus
Room 113
1025 State Route 90
Benson, Arizona 85602

AOT Presents at GEOFEST Conference

The Arizona Office of Tourism participated in the 14th Annual Arizona GEOFEST Conference last weekend at Arizona State University in Tempe. The Arizona Geographic Alliance sponsored the event for geography teachers from around the state. Nearly 200 middle-school teachers

attended and received copies of the National Geographic Arizona Sonora Desert Region Geotourism MapGuide. Laura French, AOT's multicultural representative, presented information on geotourism, the geotourism MapGuide, the partnership AOT developed with National Geographic, and Arizona Origins, AOT's interactive Web site that helps promote the arts, culture and heritage of Arizona.

Trippin' with AOT

Arizona Visit the UK and Ireland

AOT recently carried out an eight-day mini-sales mission to the United Kingdom and Ireland. The UK part of the mission comprised of four days of hands-on destination training sessions and product meetings at the offices of key UK tour operators around London and the South of England. Immediately afterwards the AOT delegation continued to Dublin, Ireland to take part in a consumer travel show, sponsored by one of the major Irish tour operators. The two-day show was held over a weekend on the outskirts of Dublin and attracted a large number of visitors, all of whom were gathering information on various U.S. destinations. During the event people were able to speak to members of the AOT delegation, ask questions on the destination and collect useful travel information. Following the consumer show, Visit USA Ireland held a travel agent training seminar where travel agents from 16 Dublin based agencies came and met with the AOT delegation to learn more about Arizona as a premier vacation destination. AOT was joined on the mission by the Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn, Tucson CVB and Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters. For more information contact Hylton Fothergill at 602-364-3706 or via e-mail at hfothergill@azot.gov.

Industry News

Allegiant Announces New Air Service out of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway

The low-cost airline, Allegiant Air, LLC, a subsidiary of the Allegiant Travel Company, announced they have initiated nonstop service to and from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The airline will target 13 smaller markets in the West and Midwest section of the United States. Allegiant's markets include service to Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Sioux Falls, S. D.; Santa Maria, Calif.; Stockton Calif.; Missoula, Mont.; Peoria, Ill.; Bellingham, Wash.; Fargo, N. D.; Green Bay, Wis.; Billings, Mont.; Rockford, Ill.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Rapid City, S. D. for more information, visit www.phxmesagateway.org.

U.S. Predicts Record Arrivals in 2007

The Commerce Department is projecting record arrivals and receipts from international travelers to the U.S. in 2007. The forecast exceeds the previous record arrival year of 2000, when more than 51.2 million international travelers visited the U.S. In 2007, the U.S. is projected to host almost 54 million international visitors, a five percent increase over 2006. The U.S. hosted 51 million international visitors in 2006. The forecast, released last week at the Travel Industry Association's annual Marketing Outlook Forum in Charlotte, N.C., predicts that by 2011, international arrivals will reach 61 million, an increase of 20 percent between 2006 and 2011. Details at <http://tinnet.ita.doc.gov>. (*Special to TA*)

Booming Blogs Boost Tourism Business

The influence of the Internet on travel planning continues to grow, says the Ypartnership, an Orlando-based tourism marketing and research firm. According to the company's 2007 National Leisure Travel Monitor, two-thirds of active travelers now go exclusively to the Internet to obtain

information when planning vacations, and four out of 10 now report "regularly reading" visitor critiques and opinions online, more than the three out of 10 who report reading critiques and reviews authored by professional journalists. Most of these user-generated opinions may be found in the growing population of Web logs, or blogs. The role of blogs in the evaluation of travel suppliers is one of increasing interest to most travel marketers, says Ypartnership. *(Special to TA)*

Survey: More Women Head Out, Leave the Menfolk Behind

Gal getaways, a heavily marketed success for the past few years, aren't going away says a report in USA Today. A 2007 survey of 2,000 women for AAA says 24 percent of American women have taken a girlfriend getaway in the past three years and 39 percent plan to take one. A recent survey of 246 American Express travel agents found that more women are traveling together to bond and escape stress, that they're spending more and looking beyond traditional spa and shopping weekends. Travel providers are tailoring more packages to meet demand, and the range of options is broadening.

U.S. Hotel Construction Sets New Record

Hotels in the U.S. set new records with 5,011 properties adding almost 655,000 rooms last year. Hotel companies reaped the rewards of repositioning strategies, said Econometrics in its latest report on the lodging industry. The third quarter of last year was the fifth consecutive record-setting quarter, the agency said. "Guestroom counts in the Pipeline are 31 percent higher than the last peak in 1999," said Patrick Ford, President of Lodging Econometrics. He added: "However, the project count is an astonishing 47 percent greater." He said new project announcements during the third quarter are at a record high of 817 projects of 102,305 rooms. "Surpassing 5,000 projects in the Pipeline is a milestone event," said Mr. Ford. "It reflects the surge of select service and mid-market brands developed earlier, as well as a number of new, contemporary brands launched in recent years. These new properties catering to the changing needs of business and leisure travelers are quickly being adopted by developers," he added. Mr. Ford said that the much-discussed credit crisis has not - as yet - significantly affected those hotels already in the pipeline or impacted developers. *(Report by David Wilkening for TravelMole e-Newsletter)*